

How does aging affect my risk of vein disease?

Blood clots in the veins can occur in anyone at any age. However, like other forms of heart and blood vessel disease, vein disease becomes more common as you get older.

The risk of blood clots in the deep veins of the legs ([deep vein thrombosis](#) , or DVT) rises slowly until age 50, but after that, your risk doubles every 10 years. Compared with men, women of childbearing age have a higher risk of blood clots because of hormonal factors. After age 50, men have a 20% higher risk than women.

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[Chronic vein disease](#) also becomes more common as you age. While only one in 20 women younger than 24 have varicose veins (an early sign of vein disease), more than half of women older than 65 have them. The most severe form of chronic vein disease, called *chronic venous insufficiency* (CVI), is 3 times as common in women 65 or older compared with women 44 years of age or younger (12% versus 4%).

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See also: [Aging, Menopause & PAD Risk](#)

Should I consider hormone replacement therapy to reduce my vein disease risk?

No. [Hormone replacement therapy](#) (HRT) has been shown to increase a woman's risk of DVT or PE by 2 to 4 times. ³ It also slightly increases a woman's risk of developing heart disease and stroke.

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To learn more about the overall risks and benefits of hormone therapy, see [Hormone Therapy & Heart Disease](#)

What can I do to reduce my risk of vein disease as I get older?

However much we might like to, we cannot change our age or its effect on our risk of heart and blood vessel disease. However, you can change many other characteristics and conditions that put you at risk for vein disease. The older you get, the more important it becomes to get your other risk factors under control.

The first step in taking control of your vein disease risk is to work with your doctor to find out what your risk factors are and develop a treatment plan to get your numbers where they need to be. It is never too late to start making heart-healthy changes to reduce your risk of vein disease, and many of these changes can also help prevent heart disease and stroke. See [Preventing DVT](#) for steps you can take to lower your risk and ensure you lead an active, healthy life well into old age.

You should also inform yourself about the [signs and symptoms of vein disease](#) . Proven treatments are available to relieve your symptoms and prevent complications, so be sure to discuss any symptoms you experience with your doctor.

See also: [Living with Vein Disease](#)

References

1. Silverstein MD, Heit JA, Mohr DN, Petterson TM, O'Fallon WM, Melton LJ, 3rd. Trends in the incidence of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism: a 25-year population-based study. *Arch Intern Med.* Mar 23 1998;158(6):585-593.
2. Evans CJ, Fowkes FG, Ruckley CV, Lee AJ. Prevalence of varicose veins and chronic venous insufficiency in men and women in the general population: Edinburgh Vein Study. *J Epidemiol Community Health* . Mar 1999;53(3):149-153.
3. Rossouw JE, Anderson GL, Prentice RL, et al. Risks and benefits of estrogen plus progestin in healthy postmenopausal women: principal results From the Women's Health

Initiative randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*. Jul 17 2002;288(3):321-333.

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